

The Utah Upland Game Advisory Committee

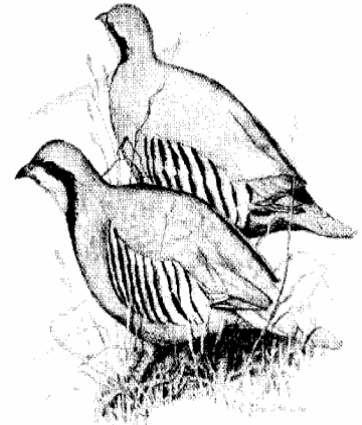
Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2004

Opening

A meeting of the Utah Upland Game Advisory Committee was held on this date.

Present:

Kelly B. Andersen
Todd Ballantyne
Kevin Conway (DWR Director)
Paul Dremann
Ron Greer
Jim Gaskill (acting secretary)
Dean Mitchell (DWR Upland Game Program Coordinator)
Miles Moretti (DWR Assistant Director)
Dan Potts
Travis Proctor
Terry Sanslow
John Slater
John Staley (Chair)
Michael R. Styler (Utah House of Representatives Majority Whip)



Old Business

Utah Chukar Foundation

Travis Proctor reported that the Chukar Foundation is progressing. The first meeting is scheduled for February 28 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be at the Salt Lake DWR headquarters. Every one interested in the improvement of the chukar resource is encouraged to attend. Bring your friends. There will be presentations by DWR personnel, displays and selection of officers.

Walk-In Access

Dean Mitchell had disappointing news regarding the Walk-in Access Program. Despite commitments of funds from the Blue Ribbon Fisheries Advisory Council and strong support from the agricultural community, the Habitat Council and the UGAC, the program has been put off until 2005. The Northern Region has indicated that they do not have sufficient resources to implement the program. Several members of the committee have worked hard to promote this program, which has the potential to open up new areas for sportsmen access, while addressing the concerns of landowners. The committee strongly hopes that the decision can be revisited.

New Business

Presentation by Representative Styler

Rep. Styler presented two issues to the committee for consideration:

First was his concern that the monies from the upland game portion of the Habitat council for predator control were not particularly benefiting upland game. He proposed that those funds (\$70,000) could be allocated such that there was more flexibility in how they are spent. A discussion followed regarding how that might be accomplished and it was determined that a change in the intent language was all that was required. The committee was unanimously in favor of such a change.

The second area of concern was the regulations controlling the planting of pheasants by non-Division personnel. Mr. Styler said that he is a farmer in the Delta area and he has witnessed a serious decline in the pheasant population in recent years. He stated that he wanted to raise or buy and plant some pheasants on his property, but ran into a great deal of red tape involved in the process. Rep. Styler made it clear that he wished only to augment the population and that the birds would be hunted during the regular season and that all regular season regulations would apply. Dean Mitchell then reviewed the process with the committee and all agreed that some simplification could be achieved while maintaining the integrity of the resource and the health of the wild and domestic populations in the state. The following motion was proposed by Paul Dremann and seconded by James Gaskill:

Rule R657-4 (Possession of Live Game Birds) be modified to simplify the process private individuals must go through to raise and plant pheasants on their property, with the understanding that there is a need for a more comprehensive education program and that Department of Agriculture health rules continue and are enforced.

The motion passed unanimously.

The entire committee expressed appreciation to Rep. Styler for taking time from his busy legislative schedule to meet with us and for his continuing support of the wildlife programs in the state.

Columbian Sharp-Tailed Grouse Study

Mr. Ron Greer from USU presented information on his study of the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse in Northern Utah.

He has identified historical ranges and present-day lek locations in Utah. Historical ranges have decreased significantly, likely due to agricultural and urbanization activities. The study has focused on the active lek sites in Northern Utah. A total of 15 birds were trapped and radio collared. Standard ecological data was collected from the capture sites. The birds were subsequently located via radio telemetry and data from each flush location was collected. Preliminary data suggests that CRP areas are strongly favored by sharp-tails. The collared birds have suffered 74% mortality. Most of the identified deaths were the result of avian predation. Future goals include tracking the surviving birds and trying to determine migration patterns, wintering sites and seasonal food preferences. Mr. Greer hopes to capture and tag about 30 birds next season. Several areas have also been selected for habitat improvements. The study is ongoing.

The committee indicated support for the project and hope that it will turn into a long-term study, Mr. Greer also stated that he would welcome volunteer help in all areas of the study. Any one interested in helping is urged to contact him at rongreer@cc.usu.edu

Election of New Officers

Chairman John Staley asked the members of the committee to be prepared to select new officers at the next meeting. John has served as chair for several years and Secretary Tony Perkins has been transferred to New York by his employer. Both have served long and hard and they will be missed.

Upland Game on the Internet

You can get more Utah upland game information at <http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame/> including the past minutes for this committee, news, proclamations, and information about upcoming public meetings.

Agenda for Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 23rd at 6:00 P.M. at the DWR State offices at 1594 West North Temple, Salt Lake City.

Topics will be:
Election of new officers

Everyone is invited to attend these meetings; it's an opportunity for you to get any issues you know about onto the table.

Let us know of donations, projects, etc., made by your group – we want to publicize good activities!

If you know of other interested parties who should get copies of the minutes, and who are involved in upland game organizations or programs, please get us their name. If you want to make an electronic mail input, please send it to one of the following:

Dean Mitchell deanmitchell@utah.gov
tony.perkins@comcast.net

Hal Smith hmsmith@allwest.net

Tony Perkins

John Staley jsmunster@comcast.net

Respectfully submitted ...

Jim Gaskill

Transmitted by

Tony Perkins